

EA-3137

2 JUL 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, SB

SUBJECT: D Soviet Press and Radio Mention of Freds LAUNAGS
and His Activities for CIA

1. On 28 June 1967 the Riga radio broadcast a story entitled "Why He Was Not Given A Visa". The story concerned Freds* LAUNAGS, who had worked for CIA since 1951 and had participated in the training of other Latvian agents. On 1 July the Latvian newspaper Cina (The Struggle) and Padomju Jaunatne (Soviet Youth) carried this story under the same title but in greater detail. A copy of the transcript of the broadcast as well as copies of the story in each of the newspapers are attached. An FBIS translation of the Padomju Jaunatne article is also appended.

2. The article in Padomju Jaunatne provides basically accurate details of LAUNAGS' life, except for two points: (1) he did not serve in an Abwehr unit during World War II and (2) he had no connection with the "SS-Jagdverband-Ost". Concerning his CIA connection, the newspaper provides a generally accurate chronology and adds some details of other Latvian operations previously surfaced in Caught In The Act. In this connection there are also two basic inaccuracies: (1) L. BROMBERGS is said to have been sent on his operational mission against his will; and (2) Roberts ANCANS is said to have been an agent instructor. (Actually he was considered for such a position, but was never used.) LAUNAGS' personal problems of the past two to three years are also accurately described, leading to the assumption that he was quite candid during his visits with KALNINS in the offices of the Soviet mission to the UN.

* Although LAUNAGS' correct first name is Freds, such a first name is unusual in the Latvian language. Therefore, the broadcast and the newspapers give his first name as Alfreds, presumably on the assumption that Freds is derived from the correct first name Alfreds.

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3. The radio broadcast and each of the two newspaper articles contain essentially the same data about the case. All basic points which are mentioned in Padomju Jaunatne appear also in the radio transcript as well as in The other newspaper article, although each of the latter two items contain one additional point:

a. The radio transcript states that: "At first Alfreds LAUNAGS' immediate supervisor was [] a CIA operative in Munich. When he noticed that A. LAUNAGS was striving to become a powerful personality among the Latvian anti-Soviet emigres, [] supported his doings. Complying with A. LAUNAGS' request, he, among other things, subsidized 'Cela Zimes' written and edited by the war reporter and poet, the Nazi Andrejs EGLITIS, as well as other anti-Soviet propaganda publications." These statements are correct except for the Nazi taint given to EGLITIS. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first public revelation of our subsidy of Cela Zimes, a magazine published by LAUNAGS' group in Sweden during the early 1950's.

b. The newspaper Cina contains the following statement: "However, LAUNAGS and BROMBERGS had actually begun their dirty careers in the service of the Gestapo; thus those who know can explain, in part, the failures which beset them as well as their students, the CIA agents. Many of them were well-known to the Soviet counterintelligence service long before arrival on our territory."

4. The Cina article takes a gratuitous swipe at the Agency by quoting a statement which appeared in the German magazine, Der Spiegel. According to Cina the following statement was made by New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison in the course of an interview with a representative of the German magazine: "There is hardly any difference between our present-day CIA and the former Gestapo, maybe only that CIA knows better how to cover its activities."

5. Immediately upon receipt of the radio transcript and the newspapers, we advised [] of your Division and, per

* Alias used by [] []

his request, we have forwarded a copy of the translation to [] of DCS. In light of previous correspondence with the FBI, I&NS, the Secret Service and the Department of State concerning LAUNACS, we presume you will wish to notify these agencies of the recent development. For this purpose we have attached four additional copies of the transcript, the two newspaper articles and the translation of the Padomju Jaunatne item.

[] Chief, CI/R&A []

Attachments - ab

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1 - Assistant to the Director

WHY HE DID NOT RECEIVE A VISA

"I am Alfreds Lauvags, a journalist." That is the way a tall, USSR dark-haired man introduced himself to an employee of the ~~UN~~ Mission to the United Nations in New York. During the conversation, he explained that he was a Latvian, that he had lived abroad since 1945, and that he hoped to write a series of articles for the newspapers about the present situation in Latvia.

When Alfreds Lauvags was asked for which newspaper or magazine he was working, he got visibly confused, but after he had thought for a while he answered that he wanted to tell the truth and nothing but the truth about life and conditions in his homeland. He was going to do so in the little newspaper Leiks published by H. Rudzitis, which is known to Latvians in the US as a publication of lies and slander, hostile to our people and to Soviet Latvia. Alfreds Lauvags also wanted to translate Latvian folksongs into English. To carry out his plans, he wanted to visit Latvia; however, only on the condition that the Soviet Mission would guarantee his personal immunity and would pay his travel expenses.

Thousands of people from various countries visit each year in Latvia and other Soviet republics. An increasing number of Latvians living abroad visit their relatives and friends each year.

The annual visits by Latvians from the US, Sweden, West Germany, and other Western countries have already become traditional. After spending days or weeks with their relatives and close friends and seeing with their own eyes all that is new and in a state of development, they carry away with them some of the warmth of this country. And it is true that no one who had good will and good intentions has ever been denied the hospitality of Soviet Latvia. *X July 67*

Leunags earned the appreciation of the Gestapo for his zealous services. He was assigned to a German intelligence school. After completing his training, he worked in special groups of spies and saboteurs known under the name "Frontaufklaerungstrupp-212" and "SS Jagdiverband-Ost."

After the German capitulation in Kurzeme, Alfreds Leunags together with other saboteurs went into hiding in the woods, and took part in plundering the homes of peasants and fishermen. However, life for these criminals became more difficult with each day. They were in danger of being caught and punished for their evil deeds. To avoid this, the armed band of Alfreds Leunags invaded Jurkalne on 31 October 1945, stole a motorboat from the fishermen, and escaped to Sweden.

Let us follow for a little while the steps of Alfreds Leunags on the other side of the Baltic Sea. After arriving in Sweden, Alfreds Leunags naturally posed as a "national hero" and "Latvian fighter."

Other Latvian emigres found work in plants and factories in order to earn their living. Alfreds Leunags did not know how to work and he did not feel like learning any job. He sought to establish contacts and offered his services both to the Swedish and to the British intelligence services, so that he could continue to engage in espionage and thus become acclimated.

In Sweden he again studied in a spy training school. After

finishing it, he carried out assignments of the Swedish secret service and at the same time collaborated with British intelligence organs, because Alfreds Launags felt that the appropriate Swedish circles did not value his abilities and his services highly enough; in addition, they paid too little for dangerous espionage work. Therefore, he was on the lookout for new, richer bosses. The Americans seemed that way to him.

Several US Congressmen and resident agents of the CIA have expressed their sympathy for the emigres from socialist countries, who occupy anti-Soviet and anti-Communist positions and who claim that they are fighting for the restoration of the capitalist regime in their country. Congressmen sometimes need the support of such fighters during election campaigns, and the CIA needs them for the purpose of finding agents who would be suitable to conduct espionage and sabotage in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. CIA resident agents in Western Europe are generous in their expressions of sympathy toward members of anti-Soviet organizations of Latvian emigres. This attention flatters the Latvian bourgeois nationalists who, having compromised themselves by their collaboration with Hitler Germany, now try to pose as democrats, call themselves political refugees, and offer their political services to all who will pay something for them.

Alfreds Launags was also active among these "political refugees" and "national fighters" in Sweden. He soon came to the attention of the CIA resident agents and in 1951 he placed himself at the disposal of the US intelligence service.

At first the immediate supervisor of A. Launags was [] a CIA officer in Munich. He noticed that Alfreds Launags was striving to become a man of importance among the emigres hostile to the Soviet Union, and he supported Launags' actions. Among the Latvian emigres, Launags looked for candidates who would be suitable as CIA agents. He recruited for the US intelligence service Riekstins, a bearer of the German "Knight's Cross," Ozolins, and several other Latvian emigres living in Göteborg and other Swedish cities.

CIA training schools for spies and saboteurs were located in West Germany and in the US. In order to train agents for CIA espionage missions in Soviet Latvia and other Soviet republics, they were given instruction in sending and receiving coded radio-grams, making use of secret writing, handling firearms and other weapons, collecting information on military and economic matters, and carrying out other espionage assignments. Alfreds Launags and his friend, L. Brombergs, a former policeman from Riga, performed the duties of instructors in US spy schools, at first under the supervision of [], and since 1952 under that of the notorious CIA colonel Kullis. Brombergs gave lectures about conditions in Latvia. Alfreds Launags prepared fictitious biographies for the agents. In addition to forged passports, military service records, employment certificates, and other documents, with which the CIA supplied its agents, they had to be able, if necessary, to relate or write their biography in a

convincing manner, concealing the true facts concerning their [date and place of] birth, education, employment, etc.

To make the information regarding conditions in Latvia sound more believable and to convince the students that the US intelligence service was fully and extensively informed on events in Latvia, Kulls instructed Alfreds Leunags to write a detailed report about conditions in Latvia until the time of his escape to Sweden and also to read republic newspapers and journals regularly. Correspondents' reports or other articles, which might be useful as teaching material about conditions in Latvia, had to be clipped, systematized, and arranged in a special card file.

There is a saying that "whoever you travel with, you sing their songs." Alfreds Leunags, Brombergs, as well as their colleague, the CIA spy school "instructor" Roberts Ancans, and other similar "operators," many enticed/other Latvians into the snares of the CIA by praising the US intelligence service and promising all kinds of benefits. However, finally even they themselves got caught.

On a CIA assignment, L. Brombergs had to fly against his will to Soviet Latvia and parachute at night, in order to find out what had happened to the "pupils" he and Leunags had trained. As it is known, with the help of the Soviet people and as a result of the vigilance of state security [KGB] employees, L. Brombergs was soon "isolated" and he is still continuing to serve the sentence for his evil deeds. He had become unnecessary to the CIA men, therefore he is a forgotten stranger. Roberts Ancans, having become "unemployed,"

spends his days in the US in poor circumstances. Because of CIA failures and the unsuccessful activity of its agents, Alfreds Leunags also became homeless and turned into a vagabond.^(Even his wife and children have left him.) Now Alfreds Leunags and his services are no longer required by CIA. In order to earn a minimum living he wanders around in the US from bar to bar, washing dishes and floors. These are the true reasons why Alfreds Leunags began to look for a way to Soviet Latvia; he appeared in the Soviet Mission to the United Nations and expressed the wish to translate Latvian folksongs into English and/to write the "truth" about his homeland and the life of its people.

Evidently Alfreds Leunags cannot be reconciled with his fate of a dissolute individual, who has been forgotten and cast away. It is his ambition to convince and prove to the CIA once more that he is a valuable, indispensable and trustworthy employee. Let him try! But the Latvian people do not need the services of such a "journalist" and "translator." Therefore, our authorities have denied him a visa for traveling to Latvia. -- I. Ievans, Padomju Jaunatne, 1 July 1967.